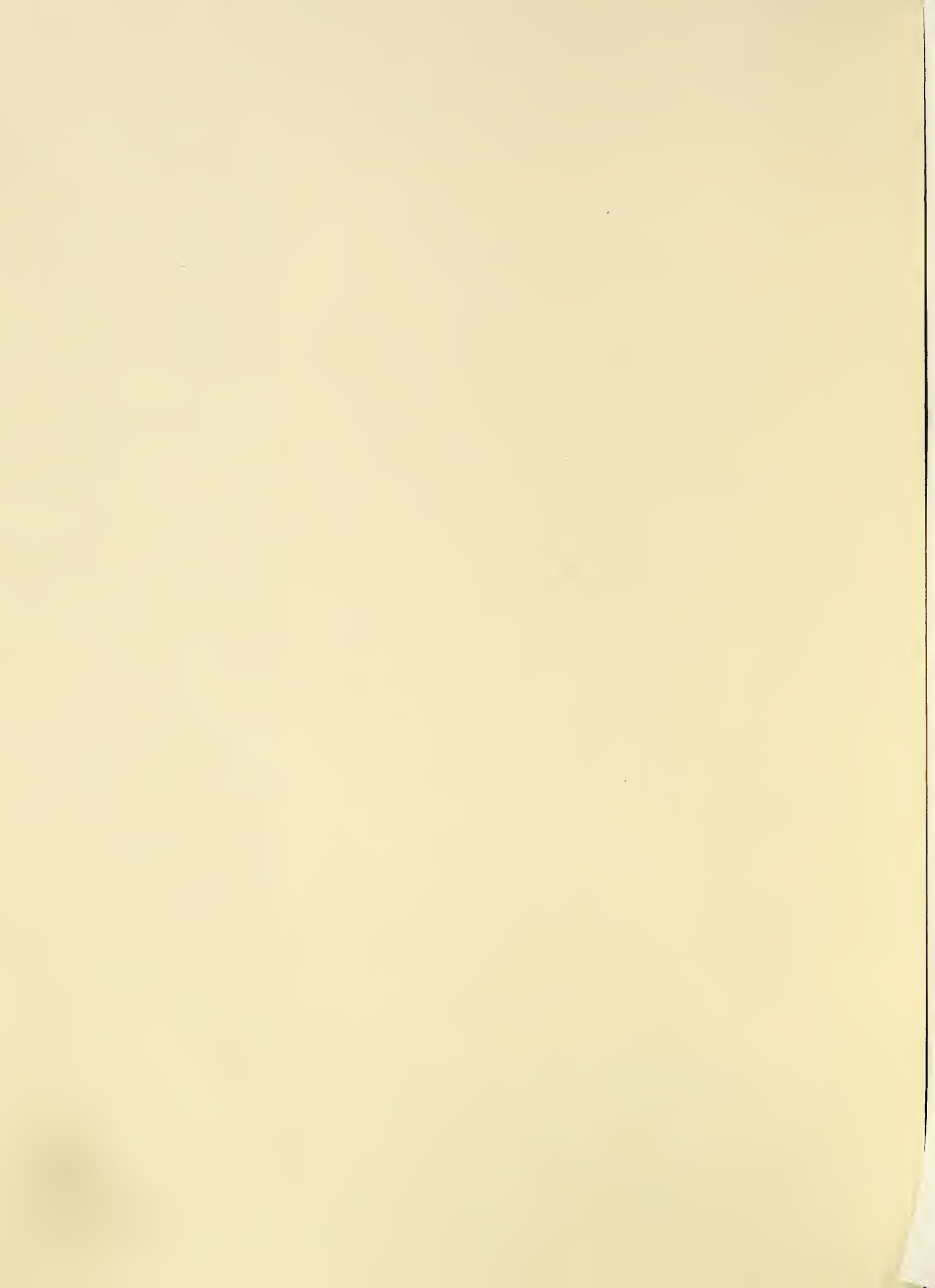


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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2504

April 19, 1991

PESTICIDE HOTLINE -- USDA & EPA have established a pesticide hotline growers can call for information on the re-registration of minor use chemicals. EPA is doing a major review of older pesticides to be sure they meet current scientific standards. Because of the anticipated reduction in the number of ag chemicals available, producers who rely on chemicals for which there is a limited market -- especially most fruits, vegetables, flowers & ornamentals -- will be impacted. The hotline number is (800) 262-0216, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EDT. Contact: Al Maruggi (202) 447-5654.

NATIONAL ARBOR DAY -- At 12 noon on Friday, April 26, people from all walks of life will join Rotary International members in planting trees across America & the world. According to Fred Denke of USDA's Forest Service, every state in the nation will have at least one major tree-planting event in their state capitol. USDA's "America The Beautiful National Tree Program" has a goal to plant & care for some 30 million trees. Contact: Robert Conrad (202) 453-9696.

30 YEARS OF SERVICE -- USDA's Economic Research Service celebrated its 30th "birthday" April 3. Actually, its roots go back 150 years to the congressional mandate to collect ag statistics, says John Lee, ERS administrator. ERS provides analysis & info that ag decision makers at all levels need. "By providing timely, relevant, competent and unbiased information, we hope to serve a constituency that bridges parties, institutions, ideologies and that thus ultimately serves the common good of the larger society." Contact: John Lee (202) 219-0300.

FARM MACHINERY PACKS SOIL -- Corn yields fall off as much as an average of 16 bushels per acre where the wheels on farm machinery pack down the soil, a three-year USDA study of an Iowa farm found. The study tested three fleets of farm machinery, each exerting a different ground pressure, says Donald C. Erbach, a USDA ag engineer. The fleets had tires, rubber tracks and experimental low-pressure tracks. "On test plots where low ground pressure tracks were used, yields averaged 102 bushels an acre," says Erbach. "That's 19 percent greater than average yields of 86 bushels an acre from tire-compacted soil." Contact: Donald C. Erbach (515) 294-5725.

1987 FEDERAL PAYMENTS to farm operators totaled \$9.6 billion, primarily under federal programs authorized in 1985 to limit production & encourage conservation, a new report from the 1987 Census of Agriculture shows. The report shows nearly 700,000 of the nation's 2.1 million farms received some direct government payment. The majority of these payments went to the largest grain & cotton farms. Contact: Agriculture Division (800) 523-3215.

ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD -- USDA is looking for 14 organic farmers, handlers, retailers & experts to serve as members of the National Organic Standards Board, which was authorized by the 1990 Farm Bill. The board will help develop standards for producing organic farm products. The normal board membership term will be five years. Applications are due by May 31 to **Harold S. Ricker**, assistant director, Transportation & Marketing Div., AMS, USDA, Room 4006-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456. Contact: **Harold S. Ricker** (202) 447-2704.

MERCHANDISING ORGANIC PRODUCE -- After a surge in sales following the Alar apple scare, organically grown products are losing consumers' approval at the marketplace. USDA ag economists say better merchandising may help perk up sales. Because the perceived benefits of organic produce differ, the market is not homogeneous. The three target markets -- environmental, health & taste conscious -- are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but do require separate merchandising efforts. Contact: **Stephen L. Ott** (202) 219-0313.

PICTURE-PERFECT VS. BLEMISHED PRODUCE -- How important is a product's appearance? When offered a choice between picture-perfect & blemished produce, California consumers preferred the pretty. Yet, when told the scarred produce had been grown with half the pesticide sprays, consumers overwhelmingly chose the scarred oranges. Consumer advocates & environmentalists say people are willing to trade some physical perfection for lower use of pesticides. The produce industry says consumers insist upon blemish-free fruits & veggies. Contact: **Lori Lynch** (202) 219-0689.

TIMBER POLICY SALE CHANGE -- USDA's Forest Service is proposing to change the agency's commercial timber sale program to permit commercial timber sales only on national forests where program revenues exceed costs, or, if not, where long-term benefits of the timber sale program outweigh costs. **John Beuter**, deputy assistant secretary of agriculture for natural resource & environment, says the proposal addresses the issue of below-cost timber sale programs, which are defined in the proposal as those for which costs have exceeded revenues for three consecutive years. Comments are due by June 16 to: **F. Dale Robertson**, Chief, Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090. Contact: **Denver James** (202) 475-3781.

USDA INVESTIGATES DISEASE THREAT -- USDA is investigating the disease threat to the U.S. poultry industry from a pet bird in California that was infected with exotic Newcastle disease. So far, only one parrot is involved, says **James W. Glosser**, administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. The diseased bird was purchased March 23 in Spring Valley, Calif. It later became ill & after a veterinarian found the bird hopelessly ill, it was destroyed humanely. USDA confirmed the bird was infected with exotic Newcastle disease April 12. Exotic Newcastle disease is especially deadly to commercial poultry. An outbreak that spread from imported pet birds to poultry farms in California caused losses of \$56 million between 1971 & 1974. Contact: **Margaret Weil** (301) 435-6573.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1767 -- USDA is providing emergency food assistance to workers who lost their jobs because of the December freeze in California's Central Valley. On this edition of **Agriculture USA**, Maria Bynum reports on the economic impact of the freeze for California communities & consumers across the nation. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1249 -- Economizing; repotting house plants; workforce diversity; safe microwave cooking; sugar on the rebound. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1757 -- USDA News Highlights; conservation reserve program; final rules are out for 1991 farm programs; new agriculture secretary sets his priorities; fast track authority. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1416 -- Aerobic training at 60; oxygen & older muscles; seniors pump iron; new niacin test; vitamin C & colon cancer. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Mon., April 29, livestock/poultry update; Tues., April 30, crop/weather update, world tobacco situation, ag prices, catfish production; Wed., May 1, horticultural exports, Tues., May 7, crop/weather update. (These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling!)

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(Week of April 18, 20 & 22, 1991)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on clothing care; Will Pemble takes a look at a versatile gum for sugar.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan, speaking before the National Association of Agricultural Journalists on his priorities for agriculture & testifying before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Rural Development; USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather & crops; USDA Economist Gary Lucier on vegetables; USDA Administrator Daniel Haley on food assistance to California; USDA World Board Chairmar James Donald on wheat stocks.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on healthy weights; Pat O'Leary reports on pesticide applicator training.

Available on Satellite Westar IV, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT
SATURDAY10 - 10:45 a.m., EDT
MONDAY8 - 8:45 a.m., EDT

OFFMIKE

SIX-PART SERIES...on "Farm Safety in the Springtime" was recently produced & aired by Cindy Cunningham (KICD, Spencer, Iowa). Several safety issues were covered including handling livestock, equipment hazards & what to do after an accident. Recent rains have flooded low-lying sections in the state's southeast, but sub-soil moisture remains short in sections of the northwest.

HUGE INCREASE...in cotton acreage is underway in Arkansas, says James Guthrie (KFIN, Jonesboro, Ark.). Producers tell him an additional 300,000 acres will be in production. James says he's noticed an improvement in attitude since last winter by both farmers & local businesses. Money is available if producers can show how they will pay it back.

THANKS...to U.S. Senator Conrad Burns (R-Mont.), a former farm broadcaster, who recently stopped by the Radio & TV Division while he was at USDA.

Farm Broadcasters Letter

Office of Public Affairs
Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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SWITZERLAND...is on the itinerary of Jack Crowner (Farm Service Network, Louisville, Ky.). He leaves July 18 for ten days abroad as the guest of CIBA-GEIGY. The trip is part of his selection at the 1990 NAFB convention as Farm Broadcaster of the Year. Jack recently returned from a trip to Florida where he covered a process that floats young tobacco plants in water to develop the root system, rather than planting in beds.

TWENTY RADIO STATIONS...in Wisconsin recently participated in prompting & selecting the Wisconsin Farm Wife of the Year, says Jerry Urdahl (WWIB, Chippawa Falls, Wisc.). Each station took applications and selected a contestant from their area for final selection. Jerry says they hope to have 30 stations participating next year.

WELCOME...to Larry Lyle (AG DAY, South Bend, Ind.) as executive producer. Larry was formerly a news producer in Savannah, Ga.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division